(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, in what merger government ensure proper implementation of the instructions in this regard?

THE MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) With effect from 1-4-1993, a new Sleeper Class has been introduced, fare for which has been fixed at 25 per cent higher than the second class fare.

(b) A Sleeper Class passenger enjoys one berth at night and a reserved seat during day time. Only confirmed and RAC passegers are authorised to travel by these coaches, thereby eliminating overcrowding. Since the number of passengers is limited, the facility of toilet, water and other amenities are shared by limited number of passengers. The Sleeper Class passengers are given free allowance of 40 kgs. in luggage as against 35 kgs. for second class passengers.

(c) to (e) With a view to curb the evil of ticketless|irregular travel, regular surprise checks are conducted both on short distance and long distance trains by mobilising large number of ticket checking staff and officers in association with Special Railway Magistrates, Government Railway Police and Railway Protection Force. Instructions have been issued to the Railways to pay special attention to the genuine passengers travelling in Sleepr Class with reservation.

Nation-wide strike by Railway employees

382. SHRI KAILASH NARAIN SARANG: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that he Railway employees are contemplating to go on a nation-wide strike in September, 1993;

(b) if so, the details of their demands; and

(c) what are the steps taken to settle the major demands of the Railway employees?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) to (c) Earlier Railway employees were contemplating to go on strike in September, 1993. However(according to latest information available, all Central Government employees, including Railwaymen are proposing to go on indefinite General Strike in case their following demands are not settled immediately:

(i) Merger of portion of Dearness Allowance with Basic Pay.

(ii) Setting up a permanent wage review committee for Central Government employees.

(iii) 20 per cent increase of wages as interim relief.

(iv) Non-implementation of Awards:

(a) Grant of Rs. 30/- per month to non-gazetted employees as transport subsidy for travel between the place of residence and the place of work.

(b) Encashment of Earned Leave while in service.

(iv) Removal of ceiling limit for Productivity Linked Bonus (PLB) so as to consider all non-gazetted staff for payment of PLB irrespective of their pay.

These demands concern all Central Government employees including Railwaymen and no isolated view can be taken by the Ministry of Railways.

Train Accidents

383. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of major rail accidents that occurred during the last six months; the number of persons killed| injured and the loss of property suffered; and

(b) the causes of such accidents and the steps taken to check their recurrence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) During the period January-June 1993, 247 consequential

trian accidents have occurred as a result of which 139 persons lost their lives, 156 persons received grievious injuries and 210 minor injuries. The loss of property suffered in these accidents is to the tune of Rs. 35 crores:

(b) The main reasons for the train accidents are as follows:

(i) Failure of track, sudden rail fracture and sinkage of track due to heavy rains, etc.,

(ii) Defect in the mechanical equipment of the coach, wagon or locomotive like wheel, undergear or springs, etc.,

(iii) Staff failure.

(iv) Negligence of road users,

(v) Sabotage, and

(vi) Natural calamities and incidental causes.

The steps being taken to eliminate such accidents include renewal and rehabilitation of overaged assets like track, bridges, rolling stock, etc. In addition, inspection of track and examination of coaches, wagons and locomotives have been intensified. Ultrasonic testing of rails and axles is being done to identify fractures. Special emphasis is being laid on adherence to laid down procedures for reception and despatch of trains at stations. Besides, maintenance and upkeep of signalling equipment is also being given utmost attention. Drivers are being monitored and counselled about their driving techniques. Intensive training of running, maintenance and operating staff is conducted.

Sleeper Coach on Long Distance Trains

384. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the inroduction of sleeper coach on long distance superfast trains has put day long journey get the encroachments removed.

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have received a number of representations from M.Ps. and other public passenger associations in this matter; and

(c) if so, the details of the steps Government have already taken or prppose to take to ease the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) Passengers can travel in Sleeper Class during day time also with reserved Sleeper Class tickets.

(b) Representations have been received to provide more accommodation to Second Class short distance passengers and daily commuters.

(c) The number of Second Class unreserved coaches has been augmented in many long distance Mail/Express trains, depending on traffic justification and feasibility. In addition, 13 new trains have been introduced and the run of 14 trains has been extended. This is expected to cater mainly to the needs of the Second Class unreserved passengers, who undertake day long journeys as well as to the short distace passengers.

Occupying Railway land by private persons

385. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 42000 acres of Railway land is illegally occupied by private persons;

(b) if so, what action has been taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K. C. LENKA): (a) No, Sir. The area of railway land illegally occupied is 4236 acres.

(b) Action is taken under the provisions of Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 to get the encroachments removeed.